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Creating Global Competitive Economies:
2020 Vision Planning & Implementation

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The Challenge of Delivery of Anti-Corruption Policies in Creating Globally Competitive Economies: A Study of Nigeria's Fourth Republic

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Abstract

Nigeria aims to be one of the twenty top-most economies in the world by the year 2020. The potential of global competitiveness that abounds in Nigeria can only be translated into real growth when corruption is reduced to its barest minimum and service delivery enhanced. The fourth republic (Obasanjo's administration) was characterized by the waging of a serious anti-corruption war which became its sing-song throughout the eight years of rule. Beyond rhetorics, anti-graft agencies were established and enabled by appropriate legislations to investigate corruption cases, prosecute offenders and confiscate their properties. This research examines the transition conditions in which the crusade against corruption was waged during the Obasanjo years (1999 to 2007). It offers a critical assessment of the extent of results achieved during the years with regards to the resolve to stamp out corruption. Issues discussed, among other factors, include the anti-corruption initiatives engaged, the impact of the anti-corruption reforms, the existence of weak institutions, the dysfunctional electoral system and the ubiquitous presence of lack of leadership by example in the anti-corruption war. The study points out that although the anti-graft reforms had the potentials to reduce corruption and make Nigeria a globally competitive economic force, they were largely a failure due to the myriad of delivery challenges identified. It is against the background of the ongoing war against corruption in Nigeria that it proffers recommendations to bring to reality the laudable intentions of the anti-corruption fight in the country.

Keywords: Anti-corruption, Obasanjo, global competitiveness, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The progress of Nigeria, a country of more than 140 million people with a landmass of about 923,768.64 sq.km and immense human and material resources, has, since independence, been undermined by long years of military rule, political instability and systemic corruption. Since the assumption of office by the Olusegun Obasanjo government in May 1999, the major challenge to contend against had been corruption which not only cut across the entire Nigerian society spectrum but had deeply eaten into the society's moral fabric. It was so pervasive that it became a routine habit. Corruption and cronyism have long haunted Nigeria as the Nigerian society has been an emblem of crass materialism where the leaders become famous for financial excesses and the public service, a symbol of graft (Ibagere, 2000). Odunlami (2004) notes that corruption has remained a way of life in Nigerian government and business. Instances include: 1999 allegations that some senate members paid some senators in exchange for their votes- the